2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around
248 the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by
241 hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels,
262 clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

[136] The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum, bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that
[868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 178 463 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often reflect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the region, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States. The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show baskets have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigantic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft.

[531] [177]

285 171 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

[178]

285 868 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Children learn the art of basketmaking at an early age.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

285 rials—pine needles, bulrushes, sweet grass, and palmetto leaves—for
868 the girls and women to weave. The children learn to make baskets at around six years of age, and by the time they are in their teens, each has mastered a certain style and design that generally carries his or her
285 trademark in the weave. Most of the baskets follow a simple coiling technique with a knot used as a base. The free ends of the sweet grass bundle are folded and then wound around the knot to begin a coil. Then an opening is pierced in the center knot and a strip of palm leaf is pulled through the opening, wrapped around the grass coil, and pulled back through a second opening made in the knot to anchor or station the coil. As this process is repeated, the coil begins to circle out from the center knot to create a basket base that is circular or oval. From this base, the basket is constructed by changing the angle at which one circular row is fastened to another. The palm stitch in the Mt. Pleasant baskets does not interlock with the stitches in previous rows of the coil. Consequently, the stitches appear to radiate out from the center knot in a linear way, much like the spokes of a wheel.[41]

439 The baskets, like the islanders' other crafts, are displayed along
439 U.S. Highway 17, north of Charleston, or sold in the open markets near downtown Charleston where tourists crowd in daily to haggle over the prices of vegetables, hand-woven clothing, jewelry, and other wares, including items of brass, silver, and gold. Everything has a bargain price, and the basket sellers, like the other marketeers, are professionals in the art of bargaining. Baskets are priced according to size and difficulty of design, and it is a bad reflection on one's selling skills to be pressured into parting with a basket at a price lower than that established by the community; such an act may bring censure from one's family and from members of the community. The basket weavers, although seemingly unsophisticated and some of them certainly poor, are quite shrewd bargainers. I watched an exchange that took place when a very impressive car stopped in front of a basket stand along Highway 17. The driver, smoking a large cigar and accompanied by three elegantly dressed women, strolled over to look at the baskets. He picked up a tray of coasters and asked the basket weaver how much she would charge him to make coasters with specific dimensions for his beer cans. She hesitated, looked down at the basket that she was weaving, and said, "About twenty dollars." He then asked how long it would take for her to make them. She replied with some reservation that it would take her at least a week. He quickly took a

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Sea Island children are intimately familiar with the ocean and learn the art of casting and netting as early as the age of three.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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SOLO: Annie?
GROUP: Ma'am?
SOLO: You been to the wedding?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: Did you get any cake?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: How nice that taste?
GROUP: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
ALL: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

524

Miss Yvonne Hunter

A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

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It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that: making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13[A]) to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.[B]) Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful attitude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" Europeanized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A, [For Illustration 13, see Category 114, plate facing p. 81--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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30. Julia Teaching the St. Simon's Children: "Emma You My Darlin'"

[facing p. 192]